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CONSIDERATION OF EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO ENHANCE THE PROTECTION, SECURITY AND SAFETY OF DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR MISSIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 5 July 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea on 3 July 1999 concerning Ethiopia's violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 147, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Tesfa Alem SEYOUM
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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ANNEX

Press release issued on 3 July 1999 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea

Tigre People's Liberation Front's untenable diplomatic "conduct"

It is to be recalled that in flagrant violation of the letter and spirit of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961, and the various agreements between the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and Ethiopia as a host country, Ethiopia has carried out the following:

- Expelled all Eritrean diplomatic and technical staff in June 1998;
- Picked up all local staff from their homes and streets and deported them;
- Encircled the Embassy premises and residence with a round-the-clock "security" watch;
- Prevented visitors, with the exception of other accredited ambassadors, from entering the premises;
- Denied the Eritrean Ambassador and his deputy freedom of movement;
- Declared Eritrea's Permanent Representative to OAU persona non grata and ordered him to leave the country within 24 hours. Upon his departure, security forces searched the Ambassador and his briefcase at the Bole airport and confiscated documents of the mission;
- On 11 February 1999 armed agents of the Government of Ethiopia forcibly entered the residence of the Ambassador. They ransacked the place and took away employees of the Embassy.

Now, after perpetrating all these crimes, the Ethiopian Government has alleged, in a press statement dated 1 July 1999, that the Eritrean Government has seized Ethiopian Embassy property by "confiscating documents sent in a pouch by the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy".

The Tigre People's Liberation Front's intentions are again, thinly veiled. One week away from the OAU summit in Algiers, at which Eritrea's legitimate grievances regarding Ethiopia's violations will be discussed, the Tigre People's Liberation Front is throwing in another decoy. The Government of Eritrea has never in any way hampered the Ethiopian Embassy or infringed on any of its inherent rights. Whereas, in Ethiopia, Eritreans have been denied any consular rights or protection.

Addis Ababa is issuing these claims to further "muddy the waters". No one should be misled. Ethiopia's violations must receive the unfettered and direct attention they merit.